

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 OC-06  
CCO-00 MCT-01 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 SSM-03 COME-00  
TRSE-00 ACDA-12 SCS-06 OMB-01 CU-04 PC-01 AID-05  
EB-08 /125 W

-----126195 240505Z /20

R 230534Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7113  
USIA WASHDC  
DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WASHDC  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WASHDC  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY KABUL  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
USINT BAGHDAD  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 01879

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, IR  
SUBJ: TABRIZ RIOTS: AFTERMATH

REF: A. TEHRAN 1814, B. TEHRAN 1762, C. TABRIZ A-04

SUMMARY: GOI HAS STATED ABOUT 250 WERE ARRESTED ON CHARGES  
OF VIOLENCE AND SABATOGUE DURING FEB. 18 TABRIZ RIOHS. CURRENT  
INTENTION IS TO TRY ALL IN CIVIL, NOT MILITARY COURTS. DEATH  
TOLL UPPED TO NINE OFFICIALLY, BUT INFORMAL ESTIMATES RUN AS  
HIGH AS 200. EXISTENCE OF DUPLICATE RECORDS WILL EASE ECONOMIC  
HARDSHIP. CONSULATE TABRIZ FINDS GOI WAS BADLY UNDERPREPARED  
TO HANDLE TABRIZ VIOLENCE, WHICH WAS DEFINITELY WELL-ORGANIZED  
AND PLANNED, DOWN TO ASSEMBLY OF WEAPONS AND FIREBOMBS. MOBS  
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WERE MOSTLY UNEMPLOYED YOUTH, WHICH COULD INDICATE FUTURE  
PROBLEMS. AYATOLLAH SHARIATMADARI HAS CONDEMNED VIOLENCE, BUT  
DEFENDS RIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE. NEW INFORMATION INDICATES  
PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS TOOK PLACE FEB. 18 IN AHWAZ AND MASHAD,  
IN ADDITION TO OTHERS REPORTED REFTELS A AND B. SOME UNIVERSITIES  
WILL REMAIN CLOSED BEYOND NORMAL OPENING DATES, AND NATIONAL UNI-  
VERSITY IN TEHRAN HAD BRIEF FLURY OF AGITATION FEB. 21.

OPPOSITIONISTS IN TEHRAN SURPRISED BY TABRIZ VIOLENCE AND  
UNCERTAIN HOW THEY WILL HANDLE PRESENT EVENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. FEB. 22 PRESS REPORTING OF TABRIZ SITUATION NOTES TABRIZ  
JUSTICE MINISTRY SOURCE SAID MORE THAN 250 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN  
ARAYSTED, MANY OF WHOM ARE "PROFESSIONAL AGITATORS" BEING  
SOUGHT IN OTHER PROVINCIAL CITIES BY POLICE. ACCUSED ARE  
BEING QUESTIONED BY TEAM OF CIVIL MAGISTRATES WHO REFUSE  
COMMENT ON COURSE OF INTERROGATIONS. ACCORDING TO FARSI  
PRESS, ACCUSED WILL ALL BE TRIED IN CIVIL COURTS.

2. PRESS MORNING FEB. 22 PUT DEATH TOLL AT NINE WITH DEATH  
OF THREE OTHERS, BUT CONSUL METRINKO IN TABRIZ SAYS DEAD  
ALMOST CERTAINLY GREATER THAN THAT, NOTING 200 AS UPPER LIMIT  
CURRENTLY BEING DISCUSSED. ONE FOREIGN OBSERVER VIEWED SEVEN  
SMALL PICKUP TRUCKS LOADED WITH BODIES IN THE BAZAAR, WHICH  
WOULD SUGGEST SOMEWHERE AROUND 80-100 DEAD AT THAT LOCATION.  
NUMBER OF WOUNDED CERTAINLY HIGHER THAN OFFICIAL GOI ESTIMATE  
OF 125; ONE HOSPITAL ALONE TREATED MORE THAN 150. FULL DES-  
CRPTION OF EVENTS BEING POUCHED FEB. 23 (REF C). ONE COR-  
RECTION TO EARLIER DESCRIPTION CONTAINED REF B SHOULD BE  
NOTED: ARMY DID NOT ARRIVE UNTIL LATE MORNING/EARLY  
AFTERNOON FEB. 18, AFTER POLICE HAD LOST CONTROL INITIALLY.  
ARMY UNITS CAME FROM MARAND (45 MINUTES AWAY) AND MARAGHE  
(TWO HOURS AWAY).

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3. CONSUL METRINKO ALSO FOUND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT WAS NOT  
RPT NOT PREPARED FOR RIOT, AND SUGGESTS THAT THERE WILL BE  
SOME TIGHTENING UP IN CIVIL ADMINISTRATION AND LAW ENFORCE-  
MENT IN THE REGION. AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH OBSERVERS, CONSUL  
BELIEVES BULK OF RIOTERS WERE YOUNG MEN, MOSTLY UNEMPLOYED,  
AND THAT GOVERNMENT DESCRIPTION OF GROUP AS "ISLAMIC MARXISTS"  
HAS NO MEANING IN TERMS OF WHAT HAPPENDED. MOB CAME FROM  
LOWEST STRATA OF SOCIETY WHICH HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN MOST  
VOLATILE GROUP IN PERVASIVELY GRIM RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT OF  
IRANIAN LOWER CLASS. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS ARE DEEP (REF A), AND  
MANY OF GROUP BELIEVED THEY WERE PERFORMING HOLY DUTY BY  
MOURNING DEATH OF QOM "MARTYRS." CONSUL CONCLUDES TABRIZ  
INCIDENT HAS OPENED GATES FOR RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL FORCES  
THAT WILL NOT RPT NOT BE EASILY PLACATED. EMBASSY BELIEVES  
SITUATION NOT THAT DIFFICULT--GOI HAS UNTIL NOW REFRAINED  
FROM USING FULL RANGE OF SOCIAL CONTROLS, AND OBSERVERS IN  
TEHRAN BELIEVE STATEMENTS TO DATE DO NOT SUGGEST BACKING DOWN  
FROM BASICALLY MORE LIBERAL STANCE. GOI'S INITIAL VIEW SEEMS  
TO BE THAT TABRIZ WAS REGRETTABLE EXCEPTION TO PEACEFUL DEM-  
ONSTRATIONS ELSEWHERE (SEE BELOW) AND THAT FOREIGN ELEMENTS  
AND INEPT POLICE ACTIVITY WERE TO BLAME FOR MATTERS GETTING  
OUT OF HAND.

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ACTION NEA-10

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 OC-06  
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EB-08 /125 W

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R 230534Z FEB 78 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7114  
USIA WASHDC  
DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WASHDC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEHRAN 01879

4. MOB ORGANIZATION WAS EXCELLENT, AS SHOWN BY FACT GROUP WAS ABLE TO SPLIT UP AND TARGET SPECIFIC TYPES OF BUILDINGS--PUBLIC OFFICES, BANKS, MOVIES, SOCIAL CLUBS--WHICH REPRESENTED SECULAR SOCIETY AS WELL AS PLACES WHERE WOMEN "EXPOSE" THEMSELVES (A FUNDAMENTALIST MOSLEM NO-NO). FACT GROUP HAD GATHERED WEAPONS AND PREPARED BOMBS SUGGESTS PLANNING ABOVE AND BEYOND PREVIOUS INCIDENTS OVER PAST FOUR MONTHS. SUCH ORGANIZATION IS PROBABLY BASIC REASON WHY GENERAL VIEW IS THAT RIOTERS HAD SOME SORT OF LEADERSHIP, PERHAPS EVEN FOREIGN HELP.

5. OTHER SOURCES GIVE US POSITIVE CONFIRMATION THAT FEB. 18 DEMONSTRATIONS IN QOM, AHWAZ, AND MASHAD WERE PEACEFUL, THOUGH POLICE MAINTAINED HELICOPTER SURVEILLANCE OVER QOM  
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GROUP. FEB. 22 PRESS REPORTED MINOR DUSTUP FEB. 21 AT TEHRAN'S NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, WHERE GROUP OF AGITATORS WOUNDED TWO CAMPUS GUARDS, DESTROYED AN INFORMATION KIOSK, AND BROKE WINDOWS BEFORE BEING DISPERSED BY POLICE.

6. PRESS ALSO REPORTS OTHER UNIVERSITIES ARE NOT OPEN AROUND COUNTRY, BUT WE BELIEVE THIS IS MERELY END OF NORMAL EXAM PERIOD. AZARBADIGAN UNIVERSITY IN TABRIZ, HOWEVER, WILL NOT OPEN FOR SECOND TERM UNTIL FEB. 26, A WEEK BEYOND THE NORMAL OPENING DATE.

7. WESTERN JOURNALIST WHO HAS TALKED WITH UNION OF NATIONAL FRONT FORCES REPRESENTATIVES FOUND THESE OPPOSITIONISTS AS SURPRISED AS EVERYONE ELSE ABOUT VIOLENCE IN TABRIZ AND AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN THEM EXCEPT IN TERMS OF REPRESSED PEOPLES TAKING UP CUDGELS OF FREEDOM AND SIMILAR BOILERPLATE. SOURCE SAID GROUP PLANS STATEMENT BUT NOT SURE WHAT IT WILL BE, AND MAY WANT TO WALK SOFTLY UNTIL IT FEELS IT HAS BETTER INFO. GROUP HAD SUPPORTED AYATOLLAHS' PRE-FEB. 18 CALL FOR PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS TO MOURN QOM "MARTYRS," AND TENDS TO DISBELIEVE STORIES OF "FOREIGN INTERVENTION."

8. EMBASSY COMMENT: UNFOLDING INVESTIGATION OF EVENT NOT FINISHED YET, BUT INITIAL READING OF GOI REACTION IS SURPRISING AND SOMEWHAT CHEERING. GOI HAS NOT GONE INTO REPRESSIVE MODE, IMMEDIATELY TIGHTENING UP SECURITY, AS MANY FEARED. IT WOULD SEEM THAT GOI AUTHORITIES ARE REALLY REASSESSING HOW TABRIZ EVENTS WILL AFFECT LIBERALIZATION POLICY. FACT THAT RIOTERS ARE BEING QUESTIONED BY CIVIL MAGISTRATES AND THUS FAR APPEAR TO BE HEADED FOR CIVIL COURTS IS POSITIVE SIGN, BUT MAY JUST BE INDICATION THAT HARD LINE REACTION HAS NOT YET GATHERED STEAM. THRONE HAS BEEN NOTABLY SILENT ON EVENTS, PREFERRING TO LET OTHERS (CABINET, SENATORS) SPEAK  
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OUT FOR NOW.  
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## Message Attributes

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